PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

SURVEY NUMBER: PG76A-34

BUILDING NAME: Anthony Soper House

LOCATION: 5704 Auth Road, Suitland, Maryland

BUILDING DATE: ca. 1900

DESCRIPTION: The Anthony Soper House is a modest, frame, much altered structure located on a small remnant of a early twentieth century, 30-acre truck frame, now the location of subdivision housing. A dilapidated, heavily altered barn and wellhouse are the other period buildings on the site. There are three non-historic and non-contributing structures: a garage, a kennel and a shed. The cores of the two principal structures (dwelling and barn) originated as a small, two-room frame cabin and a wooden stable respectively. The extensive additions and alterations to both the exterior and the interior of the dwelling have largely obliterated the original cabin form. The buildings are in generally poor condition.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Anthony Soper House property, a small remnant of an early twentieth century truck farm, is significant as a reflection of the dominance of agriculture in the Prince George's suburbs of Washington, DC well into the twentieth century. The much-reduced size of the property and the considerable alteration of the buildings (along with their generally poor condition) have greatly diminished the integrity of the site. Anthony Soper and his wife likely built the structures shortly after they acquired the property at the turn of the century.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Surve	y No.	PG76A-34
Magi	No.	
DOE	ves	no

1. Nam	e (indicate p	referred name)		
historic Anthony	v Soper House	-		
	y Jopes House			
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	`5704 Auth Road			N/A not for publication
city, town Suit	tland	vicinity of	congressional district	
state Marylar		county		
3. Clas	sification			
Category district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered not applicable	Status _X_ occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible _X_ yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park X private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Prope	erty (give names a	nd mailing address	es of <u>all</u> owners)
name Ora McC	Cammon			
street & number	5704 Auth Road		telephone	no.: ₃₀₁₋₄₂₃₄₈₃₉
city, town Suit	tland	state	and zip code _{MD 207}	46
5. Loca	ation of Leg	gal Description	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc. Count	y Courthouse		liber_ ₈₁₈₀
street & number				folio 356
city, town Uppe	er Marlbo o		state	MD
6. Rep	resentation	in Existing	Historical Sur	veys
title N/A				
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ے۔pository for su	urvey records			
city, town			state	

7. Desc	7. Description Survey No. PG76A-34				
Condition excellent good fair	deteriorated ruins unexposed	Check one unaltered L altered	Check one Y original site moved date of move		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

See Continuation Sheet 7.1

8. Significance				Survey No. PG76a-34					
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	Leve?	l of Significance:	natio	nal _	_state	<u>x</u> 1	ocal		
Prepare support		a summary paragraph	of sign	nifica	ance and	a g	enera	al statement	of history and
	See Co	ontinuation Sheet 8.1							

Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. PG76A-34

Personal Communication witch Messrs. McCammon, Aubrey Soper, Robert Ammann, and Ms. Shirley Eppard

See Continuation Sheet 9.1 Land Records

10. Geographical D	ata	
Acreage of n omi<u>n</u>ated property <u>ca. two a</u> Quadrangle name <u>Anacostia</u> JTM References do NOT complete UT		Quadrangle scale 1:24,000
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ame/titleRita M. Suffness, Leader, Cultu		
rganization SHA	iai nesouices group	date June 11, 1997
treet & number 707 N. Calvert		telephone 410-545-8561
ity or town Raltimone		state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust Shaw House 21 State Circle Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) $\cancel{2}69-2438$

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST DHCP/DHCD 100 COMMUNITY PLACE CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023

514-7600

CONTINUATION SHEET 7.1 DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Anthony Soper House is a modest, frame, much altered structure located on a small remnant of a early twentieth century, 30-acre truck farm, now the location of subdivision housing. A dilapidated, heavily altered barn and wellhouse are the other period buildings on the site. There are three non-historic and non-contributing structures: a garage, a kennel and a shed. The cores of the two principal structures (dwelling and barn) originated respectively as a small, two-room frame cabin and a wooden stable. The extensive additions and alterations to both the exterior and the interior of the dwelling have largely obliterated the cabin form. The buildings are in generally poor condition.

DESCRIPTION

The Anthony Soper property, a much altered early twentieth century farm complex that has been greatly reduced in size, is composed of three contributing resources (dwelling, wellhouse and barn) and three frame structures which do not contribute to the significance of the site: a garage, shed and kennel. It is a small remnant of a ca. 30-acre parcel, which originally included a corncrib, meathouse and other agricultural structures relating to its use as a truck farm. The buildings are in poor condition and have been heavily modified as well as expanded. According to a descendent of the last Sopers to reside at the property, Bob and Inez Soper, who sold it in 1954, two of the original structures, currently extant but heavily disguised by additions, are a modestly scaled cabin and a horse stable. The small stable was dwarfed by additions constructed in the 1930's and 1940's, and was used for vegetable and equipment storage. The dwelling was tripled in size by a number of additions constructed from 1930 to 1990.

The dwelling originated in ca. 1900 as a very small, rectangular two-room, side-gable cabin, with the flank, or long side, oriented to the south (Auth Road, then a dirt path). It is currently the middle, gable-roofed section of the three-part plan. It had its principal access through a door in the east bay, now obscured by an addition, and access into the other room was internal. The attic space was not finished until a few decades ago, and was not utilized as a living quarter until then. Upon who purchasing the property in 1927, Bob Soper began a major expansion of the dwelling. He added a living room wing, which projects from the east half of the south façade, with an open porch (enclosed in 1953), in the west half, and added a shed-roofed kitchen to the rear, with a boiler room attached to the east elevation. In the 1940's he sheathed the structure with asbestos shingles. Its current owner, Ora McCammon, recently constructed a small frame addition with an open porch in the northwest corner. He also sheathed it with aluminum siding. Currently the house is accessed via the entrance to the kitchen through a shallow open porch and a door into the enclosed porch, also on the west elevation.

The west elevation is composed of the open porch with entry through a door in the north bay and the west gable end of the original cabin, with a single replacement vinyl window at the first floor level. The south third of this west elevation is the location of a porch, now enclosed with wood, with a single door located to the north of a pair of one-over-one sash windows. A concrete block pillar in the southwest corner is one of two originally placed at either end of the porch, oriented to the west. The other one was removed from the property. The wall above the wood section is sheathed with aluminum siding.

The south elevation is the one-and-one-half story gable-end of the cross wing, constructed by Bob Soper in ca. 1930. The broad, shallow slope of the gable roof encompasses both the living room addition and the now enclosed porch and has a grouping of windows: in the center and in the east bay, as well as in the apex of the gable, are paired six-over-one sash windows. In the porch section are three windows with a

CONTINUATION SHEET 7.2 DESCRIPTION

three-over-one configuration. The east façade has six-over-one sash in both the living room addition and the gable-roofed sections (paired in the latter, with one near the apex of the kitchen wing gable roof).

The wellhouse, a square, gable-roofed structure, is located a short distance west the house. It has a door in the east gable end, giving access to what descendents remember was a brick lined well.

The garage and kennels, both constructed in the last few decades, are located to the north of the dwelling. The rectangular, gable-roofed garage, oriented south toward Auth Road, has been extended to the east with a shed roofed addition. The very small, shed-roofed kennel was constructed on a concrete block base. All of these structures are sheathed with asbestos shingles.

The barn, located west of the house, is composed of a center side-gable structure that was extended to the south with a large cross-gabled addition, and to the north and west with shed-roofed sections. It originated as a stable, having been constructed by Bob Soper in 1927 right after he purchased the property. He also added the front cross-gable section, hollowing out a potato cellar below, and added numerous other sections in the 1930's and 1940's. A very large section of wall, along with sections of the board and batten siding has been removed from the east elevation of the forward cross wing. One accesses the loft of the original stable and the addition by means of doors located near the apex of the gable ends. The barn is in very poor condition, as there has been considerable patching of the walls with other materials.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUATION SHEET 8.1

SGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Anthony Soper House property, a small remnant of an early twentieth century truck farm, is significant as a reflection of the dominance of agriculture in the Prince George's suburbs of Washington, DC well into the twentieth century. The much-reduced size of the property, and the considerable alteration of the buildings (along with their generally poor condition) have greatly diminished the integrity of the site. Anthony Soper and his wife likely built it shortly after they acquired the property at the turn of the century.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Anthony Soper House has been analyzed within the contexts of national, state and local history as regards applicable National Register Criterion A (association with a significant event); Criterion B (association with a significant person); and Criterion C (the work of a master or of outstanding architectural merit). It has no known significant association with an important historical event, an important historical person, and is an undistinguished as well as greatly modified component of a farmstead (composed of generally mediocre buildings), thus it would not meet the requirements of Criterion C. With no probable information potential, it would not likely have any potential to meet the requirements of Criterion D for its information value.

This property is a small remnant of the ca. 30-acre truck farm operated by Anthony and Bell Soper, who purchased it ca. 1898. It remained in the Soper family for about one-half of a century, until it was sold to the current owners in 1954. The Sopers continued to expand and alter the structures during their tenure because the male residents, idled by poor weather in the winters, turned to carpentry projects, reflected in the myriad additions and changes to the buildings, according to a descendent.

Hemmed in by subdivisions constructed on the former farmland sold by the McCammons, the current owners, over the last fifty years, this largely open parcel, with its buildings clustered under canopy of large trees, reflects the agrarian lifestyle which persisted in the area well into the second half of the twentieth century. It is also marginally significant as one of only two Soper properties extant in the study area. The remains of the home farm of the Soper family were recently destroyed. The Sopers are distantly related to the Woods, another well-known family in the area, and are known to have helped construct some of the buildings on the Thornton-Wood Property (PG76A-24)

The site is the location of three original but heavily modified buildings, constructed ca. 1900, and three structures constructed within the last few decades which do not contribute to the significance of the site.

Historic and Geographic Context: This property is located on the western side of Prince George's county abutting the District of Columbia. A suburb of Washington, D.C. the area is characterized by densely built-up residential neighborhoods crossed by several main arterial roadways lines with commercial strip malls. Before the 1950's this area of Prince George's County was generally rural and agricultural with few small crossroads settlements. The only crossroads within the area which developed an identity was "Wood's Corner," named for a fruit stand, no longer extant, operated in the twentieth century by the Wood family. It serviced the few farms and the very small population that existed prior to 1950 near the intersection of MD 5 (Branch Ave) and Auth Road, an area currently overwhelmed by commercial development, especially mammoth automobile dealerships. Although some suburban development had taken place on the fringes of this area in the 1940's, it was not until the cessation of World War II that widespread development and suburbanization began in this area of Prince George's County.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUATION SHEET 8.2

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Suburbanization of Prince George's County

The earliest suburbs of Prince George's County date to the late nineteenth century and are located in the northern section of the County. After the Civil War, Washington took on a "boom town" atmosphere and in a tight housing market, Washington residents began to look outside the District for housing. The initial growth occurred in the previously settled towns along the B & O Railroad north of the district, there the new residents could enjoy the established local amenities (Virta 1984:190). These towns included Hyattsville, Bladensburg and Beltsville. Other developments were constructed more specifically as railroad suburbs. These places included Riverdale Park, Berwyn and Berwyn Heights, College Park and Takoma Park, all constructed in the late 1800's.

However, as the northern sections of the County were experiencing steady development, the western section of the county remained virtually undisturbed. Both the 1861 Simon Martenet Map and the 1878 Hopkins Atlas of the "Spaulding District" show a sparsely settled area with small settlements around Suitland, Silver and Camp Springs outside of the area in which this site is located. The 1955 USGS map (Anacostia Quadrangle) shows that the area was still primarily agricultural as late as the 1940's. The development of the area did not begin until the early 1950's, with the bulk of it occurring within the last two decades, when the growth was intense. There are a number of factors that contributed to this massive development of the rural countryside in the county, including the expansion of the Federal Government in the 1940's, the overall development of roads and bridges linking the areas to Washington, and the movement of Federal government agencies and facilities to the new suburbs.

The increase in the Federal work force began in the 1930's with the initiation of the New Deal and continued through World War II and on into the 1950's. This explosive expansion was attended by a rise in land values and property taxes, which again sent the Washingtonians into the suburbs in search of affordable housing. What distinguished this expansion from the late nineteenth century suburban development was it's spread into previously undeveloped area, principally into western Prince George's County. This was made possible by the automobile; the automobile allowed for development away from the railroad lines, which had limited the earlier nineteenth century developments. In addition, road improvements throughout the county as well as bridge improvement over the Potomac provided easy access to the District and made a daily commute into the district a possibility.

Plentiful land at low cost motivated the Federal government to locate offices in the suburbs as well. The Suitland Federal Center opened in 1941 on the north side of Silver Hill Road. The complex was constructed on 285 acres of land and was built to house up to three thousand employees of the Federal Bureau of the Census, Navy Hydrographic Office an a file office of the Public Roads Administration (Evening Sun, August 14, 1942).

Another major development in the area was the construction of Andrew's Air Force Base near Camp Springs. Building began in 1941 on approximately 4000 acres of farm and open land. A few years later the Suitland Parkway was constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers to provide safe and rapid access to the air base from Washington. Carrying traffic south and west of Suitland, the parkway also provided better access for Washington commuters to the growing neighborhoods on either side of the road.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUATION SHEET 8.3

These factors drew commuters and developers out to this section of Prince George's County bordered by Suitland Parkway on the north, MD 5 on the west, I-495 on the south and Suitland Road on the east. The result was the rapid construction of speculative housing and new neighborhoods. Some of the housing was constructed around the core of older settlements and some represented completely new developments.

Development in the Study Area

The only village in the immediate vicinity of the historic site that pre-dates 1950 is Morningside, however, it was only extended to the west side of Suitland Road in the 1960's and 1970's with the construction of subdivisions known as Andrews Estates, Skyline, Skyline Hills and Tournament Court. The original portion of Morningside, located on the east side of Suitland Road, was built over a number of years beginning in 1938-39 by developer Morgan Wayson and his brother-in-law Randolph Hopkins. The original subdivision contained approximately 500 homes and most were two-story Cape Cod style cottages on the east side of Suitland road. It housed veterans of World War II and their families, plus workers in the Federal Center in Suitland, its close neighbor (Prince George's County Magazine, 1983: 55). Most of the development of Morningside took place in the 1950's after it was incorporated in 1949.

With the construction of the Andrews Air Force Base and the improvement to MD 5 (Branch Avenue) in the 1950's, the Camp Springs area, which is also outside of the study area, witnessed the construction of several suburban developments. One development was Middleton Valley, located off Old Branch Avenue, on the fringes of the western edge of the project area. This development was created after old farmland belonging to the Middleton family was subdivided and made into a residential suburb. Additional subdivisions developed in the last few decades in the vicinity of the old Middleton property are Broadview and Stan Haven.

In the project study area some of the agricultural properties owned by the Auth, Darcey, Soper, Thornton and Wood families survived until fairly recently, as the subdivision and development of the farms did not begin until the 1950's. Of the twelve historic structures remaining in the project area, seven date to the first quarter of the twentieth century. These are: Thornton-Wood Farmstead (PG76A24), Milstead House (PG76A27), John and Marie Darcey Houses (PGA7631), Anthony Soper House (PG76A34), Eugene Darcey House (PG76A32), John Mulloy House (PG76A29), and the Roland Darcey Houses (PG76A32. Five properties date to the second quarter of the twentieth century. These are: Ammann House (PG76A33), Holmes House (PG76A30), Knox House (PG76A26), L. and R. Lawnmower (PG76A25) and the Marescalco House (PG76A21).

The development of Auth Village by the Darcey (and the related Ammann) families in the 1950's started the rush to subdivide by other families, resulting in developments like Manchester Estates, Darcey Manor, Darcey Estates, Andrews Village, Andrews Manor and Woodlane, which were constructed since 1950 on the farmland previously owned by these families and utilized primarily for truck farming. Long time families in the area report that Auth Road was a dirt lane, called Epiphany Lane, until well into the sixth decade of the twentieth century. Its intersection with the predecessor (Old Branch Avenue) of MD 5 was known as Wood's Corner for the fruit stand and farm owned by the Woods (and Soper) families. Across from it on the west side of Old Branch Avenue was Pat's Carryout and Restaurant (PG76A25), currently housing the L and R Lawnmower, and which was discontinued in the 1960's. The history of the study area exemplifies the history of rapid suburbanization, a process that has affected both the function and appearance of the region.

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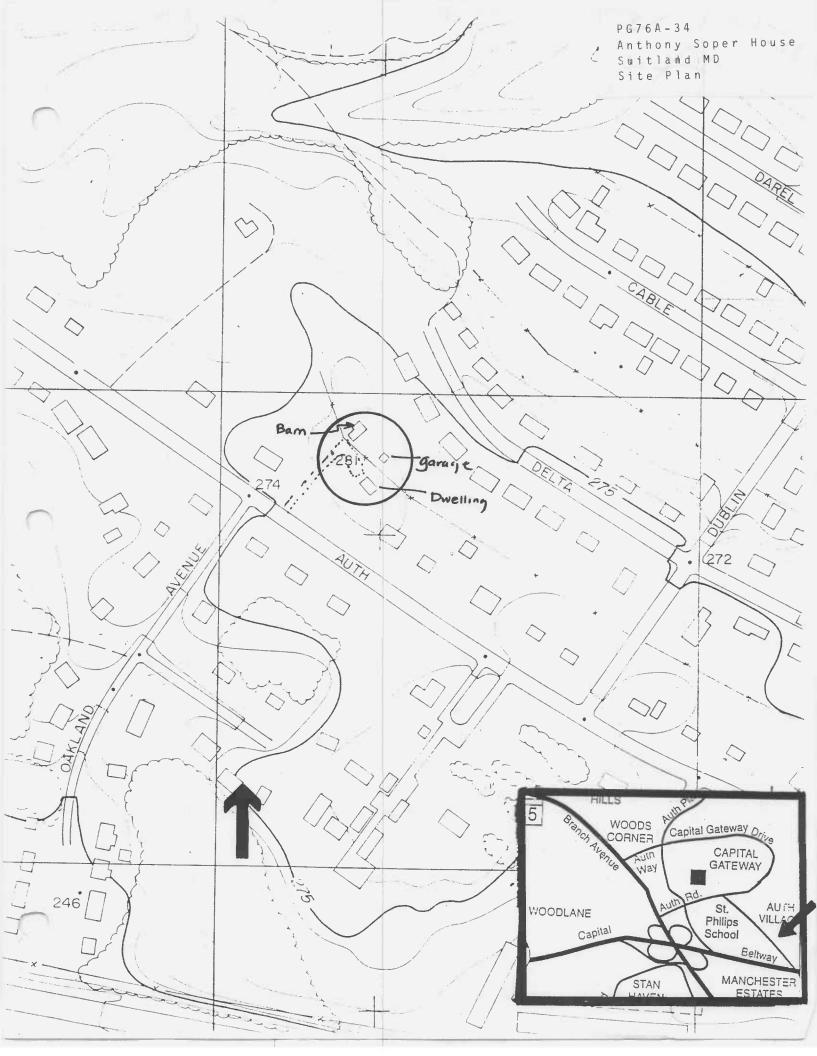
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUATION SHEET 8.4

In less than fifty years, the area went from a rural, agricultural region of Prince George's County to a modern, bedroom suburb of Washington, D.C. This suburbanization continues at breakneck speed today.







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